

## SPORTS

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# Preparing to play in Japan

## Concert to raise money for trip to power soccer event

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As Michael Archer read aloud the letter he received from Team USA's Power Soccer team, he stopped at the word "congratulations." For the Greenwood Community High School junior it meant he had earned a spot on the 12-person

team to compete in the inaugural Power Soccer World Cup in Japan. "It was real exciting to find out I made the team," Archer said. "It's an honor. Not too many people get to be on a Team USA and compete around the world."

Now that Archer has made the team, the challenge remains to raise the funds necessary to send him and his family to Japan.

A benefit concert will be tonight at Mount Pleasant Christian Church in the Center Grove area. It will feature local recording artists John M. Walker and The Arriving.

This will be the second benefit concert for Archer. The first was Dec. 12 and raised \$2,400.

Other donations from local businesses have bumped the fund-raising efforts to \$5,000. For Archer; his mother, Carrie Hayes; his step-father, Mike Hayes; and younger sister Allison to travel to Japan, they estimate the cost will be about \$20,000.

While the fund-raising efforts continue, Archer prepares for the competition.

Archer, 16, traveled to Las Vegas on Jan. 4-6 to meet his Team USA teammates and participate in the first training camp for the World Cup.

Despite meeting his teammates

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## IF YOU GO

**What:** Michael Archer benefit concert

**Where:** Mount Pleasant Christian Church, 381 N. Bluff Road, Greenwood

**When:** 7 to 9 tonight

**Who:** Local recording artists John M. Walker and The Arriving featuring Eli Skinner

**Cost:** \$5 per person, \$15 per family

**Why:** To raise money for Michael Archer's trip to Japan to compete in the inaugural Power Soccer World Cup



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com  
Michael Archer of Greenwood is a member of Team USA's Power Soccer team and hopes to travel to Japan to play in the Power Soccer World Cup.

## Edinburgh girls can't overcome slow start

By STEVE MCCLURE  
DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

**GREENSBURG**  
Their warm-up jerseys said it all.

Teamwork, hustle, motivation, discipline, dedication, concentration and effort — all printed on the warm-ups of North Decatur players — were determining factors in Thursday's Mid-Hoosier Conference girls basketball game against visiting Edinburgh.

The host Chargers built a quick 10-0 lead, had a 26-7 advantage after one quarter and went on to defeat the Lancers 77-33.

It was a bitter defeat for Edinburgh coach Delena White, who was clearly upset with her team's effort.

"We need to come to practice the day before the game, and we need to be better prepared," she said.

White added that she didn't want to take anything away from North Decatur's win.

"They've got a decent team," she said. "South Decatur competed with them, and we should have beaten South Decatur."

From start to finish, the Chargers left no room for the Lancers to mount any kind of a challenge. North Decatur (12-5 overall, 4-1 in the MHC) applied a full-court press in the opening quarter and never let up.

The Lancers (3-13, 1-6) committed 23 first-half turnovers, which led to a 45-8 deficit at halftime.

North Decatur senior Hillary Wenning scored 24 of her game-high 29 points in the first half. Sophomores Katie Gahimer and Sarah Wallpe combined for 20 points in the game.

Gahimer, Wallpe and senior Elizabeth Frye owned the boards and were dominant near the basket for North Decatur.

First-year coach Kelly Morrison was pleased with the Chargers' performance.

"We're coming along now where we need to be," she said. "I know with our seniors' experience and our trio of sophomores, these girls have all stepped up. So I think we're peaking at the right time."

North Decatur's largest lead was at 75-25 and came in the waning moments of the game, just before both coaches emptied their benches.

Freshman forward Emilee Owens led Edinburgh with 19 points and nine rebounds. Hilary Stinson added eight points.

The Lancers were 15 of 44 from the field for 34 percent, while North Decatur was 33 for 87 for 37 percent.

Edinburgh's next game will be on the road against conference front runner Waldron at 7:30 p.m. Monday.

## TONIGHT'S GAMES

Tonight's high school basketball games involving southside teams:

### Boys

Center Grove at Ben Davis, 7:30 p.m.  
Edinburgh at Eminence, 7:30 p.m.  
Franklin at Whiteland, 7:30 p.m.  
Decatur Central at Greenwood, 7:30 p.m.  
Indian Creek at Southwestern (Shelby), 7:30 p.m.

### Girls

Decatur Central at Greenwood, 6 p.m.

NBA: REVAMPED PACERS

# One shot short



The Heat's Dwyane Wade passes over the Pacers' Marquis Daniels in the first quarter of Thursday's game in Miami.

## Pacers rally, but Granger's final 3 misses

By TIM REYNOLDS  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### MIAMI

Dwyane Wade scored 33 points, including a game-saving layup with 4.3 seconds left, as the Miami Heat wasted most of a double-digit lead in the final minutes before beating the trade-depleted Indiana Pacers 104-101 on Thursday night.

Jason Williams added 20 points and eight assists for the Heat, who led 91-75 with 8:05 left before the Pacers, who had only 10 players in uniform, got within two by going on a 23-9 run.

But Wade hit a pair of free throws with 24.5 seconds left, then drove full-court for the winning score.

Danny Granger had a career-high 28 points on 9-of-15 shooting for Indiana but came up short on a potential game-tying 3-point try as the final buzzer sounded.

The Pacers acquired Troy Mur-



### NEXT UP

New York Knicks (17-23) at Indiana Pacers (20-19)

Time: 7 p.m. Saturday  
TV: Fox Sports Radio: WIBC-1070 AM

phy, Mike Dunleavy, Ike Diogu and Keith McLeod from the Warriors for Stephen Jackson, Sarunas Jasikevicius, Josh Powell and Al Harrington, but none of the new players were available Thursday.

Marquis Daniels had a season-high 23 for the Pacers, who got 17 points and 10 rebounds from Jermaine O'Neal.

The Heat were playing without Shaquille O'Neal for the 32nd

straight game while he continues his recovery from knee surgery. He will not play in Philadelphia tonight, either, but his return is expected soon.

Alonzo Mourning had 14 points, Jason Kapono had 11, and Michael Doleac matched a season-high with 10 for the Heat.

Indiana was within 11 points midway through the final quarter when Wade drove for a reverse layup and a 93-80 lead. The reigning NBA finals MVP, who already has missed six full games this year with a sprained right wrist, appeared to injure his right hand as he tumbled to the court yet stayed in the game.

They needed him late, after the Pacers made a big run.

Jeff Foster had consecutive three-point plays in a 31-second span, the second one with 2:28 left to cap a 10-0 burst that drew Indiana to 96-92, setting up the dramatic finish.

## Players adjusting to life without former teammates

By TIM REYNOLDS  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### MIAMI

Jermaine O'Neal calls Al Harrington his little brother, which explains why he spent some time last summer lobbying the Indiana Pacers to reunite them.

Off the court, they were tight. On the court, it simply didn't work, much to O'Neal's dismay.

So the Pacers are dealing with a massive roster shakeup, one that will begin in earnest today when four new faces — Troy Murphy, Mike Dunleavy, Ike Diogu and Keith McLeod — are set to arrive from Golden State in exchange for Stephen Jackson, Sarunas Jasike-

vicius, Josh Powell and Harrington, all swapped in a deal Wednesday.

"Fighting to get him back pretty much all summer then losing him three months into the season was a tough pill to swallow," O'Neal said Thursday about Harrington's departure. "But my job is to deal with the guys that we have as long as I'm in a Pacer uniform and make sure the guys that are coming in are comfortable as fast as possible."

That process starts today, when the Pacers return home. They had 10 players in uniform for Thursday's 104-101 loss in Miami and should have their full complement ready Saturday when hosting the New York Knicks, the first of 14 home dates in a 17-game span.

And that run of home games could be a season-defining stretch for the Pacers, who are 20-19 after Thursday's game, good for only fourth place in the Central Division but a mere 3½ games behind Cleveland for the best record in the Eastern Conference.

"It was a pretty quiet plane ride down here to Miami," O'Neal said. "I looked around, and most of the guys were sleeping, which is unusual, because we're a pretty big joking group of guys. Not having those voices and those faces on the plane, it was a little bit emotional."

Pacers coach Rick Carlisle sounded optimistic that the deal

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## ROAD TO THE SUPER BOWL



NFC Championship Game:  
New Orleans Saints  
at Chicago Bears



Time: 3 p.m. Sunday  
TV: WXIN-Channel 59 Radio: WNDE-1260 AM

# Title game could swing on big plays

## Teams have 'special' stars

By BARRY WILNER  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### LAKE FOREST, Ill.

Devin Hester sped down the right sideline on his way to another game-breaking special teams touchdown. The Soldier Field crowd was frenzied, and his teammates headed toward the end zone to join the celebration.

Oops. That bright yellow flag lying back where the rookie fielded Seattle's punt meant it was all for naught, and the Chicago Bears wound up needing overtime to beat the Seahawks.

"It was an awesome return on his behalf," Brendon Ayanbadejo, who is going to the Pro Bowl for his work on kick returns and coverage, said Thursday. "Too bad we had to take it back."

The play didn't count. In statistics, it never existed. But the latest example of how Hester can break open a game won't fade from memory, not for the Bears and certainly not for the New Orleans Saints, who come to Chicago for Sunday's NFC title game.

"We have smart players. They'll look at the film and watch the threat Hester presents," Saints coach Sean Payton said. "They understand the significance of a returner in a game like this. ... The guys blocking for him know if they just find a way to tie their guy up, the results could be significant."

(SEE SWING, PAGE B6)



AP PHOTO  
The Bears' Devin Hester, left, runs past Seattle Seahawks punter Ryan Plackemeier during the fourth quarter of Sunday's NFC divisional playoff game in Chicago.

## 'Da Coach' not afraid of showing loyalty to Chicago

### CHICAGO

Sure it's good to be the king. But here it's better to be "Da Coach," and never better than this week.

On Thursday morning, Mike Ditka and his replacement hips swiveled into the restaurant that bears his name and likeness on the marquee outside, then through a crowd that parted as respectfully as the Red Sea.

Ditka hasn't caught a pass in Chicago in more than 40 years, and it's been 14 since he was last seen on the sideline. But the city still hangs on his every word. And at the moment, it was dangling.

On Sunday, Chicago will play host to New Orleans in the NFC Championship Game, with the winner moving on to Miami and the Super Bowl.

As if it wasn't tough enough knowing the rest of America is already pulling for the Saints, Chicagoans have spent the past four days awaiting definitive word from Da Coach that he, at least, is still on their side.

But so far, nothing.

The city remains the base for Ditka's budding empire, home to his wildly successful eatery and the backdrop for many of his lucrative gigs as an endorser and the media Monster of the Midway.

But from the moment the Bears put away the

(SEE LOYALTY, PAGE B6)



Jim Litke